



Texas Talks – Advance Care Planning

Facing a medical crisis or an end-of-life event can be scary. The experience may be even more stressful when a loved one is unable to make decisions about their care and family and friends do not know their wishes. Although difficult, planning ahead can reduce stress while honoring a loved one's wishes.

According to the [National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization](#)([link is external](#)), advance care planning is the process of making decisions about the care one would like to receive in the event of a medical crisis or at the end of life. Family and close friends can talk to loved ones about personal values and preferences to get a better idea of the care they would like to receive and to begin a larger conversation.

Advance Directives

Advance directives are orders that a person creates to provide specific directions and wishes if they are unable to communicate those at some point in the future. The following are types of advance directives:

- **Living will:** This instructs medical personnel about any treatment a person would like to receive. To learn more, [visit the Transitions and Decisions project website](#).
- **Durable power of attorney:** Your loved one names the person they want to act as their agent in a broad range of matters even if your loved one becomes mentally or physically disabled or incapacitated. To learn more, [visit the TexasLawHelp website](#).
- **Medical power of attorney:** This gives your loved one's named agent the authority to make all health care decisions for them in accordance with their wishes, including their religious and moral beliefs, when they are no longer capable of doing so. To learn more, [visit the Texas Health and Human Services website](#).
- **Do not resuscitate (DNR) order:** This allows your loved one to refuse resuscitation attempts and requires a signature from the person's physician.
 - o *Out-of-hospital DNR order:* A specific legal document that would require your loved one's resuscitation wishes to be honored outside of the hospital. To learn more, [visit the HHS website](#).

Supported Decision-Making Agreements

Supported decision-making agreements (SDMAs) allow people who may struggle with managing their affairs to remain in control of their lives and make their own decisions with support. Through an SDMA, a person chooses someone they trust to serve as their supporter and help them with:

- Understanding options, responsibilities and the consequences of their decisions.
- Obtaining information relevant to their decisions.
- Communicating their decisions to the appropriate people.

An SDMA may be entered into by an adult with “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.” The adult must voluntarily agree to the SDMA and oversee choosing their supporter, who can be any adult, is only allowed to assist the individual with specified activities and has no decision-making authority. To learn more, [visit the TexasLawHelp website](#).

Guardianship

Guardianship is a legal process for determining if, due to a physical or mental condition, a person is “incapacitated” and unable to manage their affairs. Under a guardianship, someone is appointed to make decisions on behalf of the person deemed incapacitated. Guardianship removes a person’s rights and should be the last option. In Texas, an individual may designate a guardian before the need arises. To learn more, [read the Texas Estates Code online](#) or [visit the HHS website](#).

Palliative Care

If your loved one contracts a serious illness, they may be interested in palliative care. [According to the U.S. National Library of Medicine](#), palliative care helps people who have a serious illness feel better and improve their quality of life. It is used to treat symptoms and side effects, both during curative treatment as well as at the end of life.

Hospice

[According to the National Institute on Aging](#), hospice is comprehensive care for a person with a terminal illness who is no longer receiving curative treatment. It can be provided in a home setting or in a facility, and the care team can include doctors, nurses, social workers and spiritual advisors. If a person receiving care under Medicare elects to receive hospice care, they will stop receiving curative treatment.

Learn More

Start the conversation. Use the advance care planning worksheet to help guide your conversation with your loved one.

Advanced Care Planning Worksheet

Planning is important and can help your loved one outline their wishes. Use the following questions to help guide a discussion on advanced care planning.

1. Thinking back on impactful moments in your life, what personal values are important to you? (Faith, family, being able to make own decisions, knowing someone is advocating on my behalf.)
2. If you were to face a medical crisis, what do you want your loved ones to know? *If they are having a hard time, share what you want your loved ones to know. For example, it is important to you your loved ones understand your wishes so there is no confusion or disagreements.*
3. Have you identified someone who can make decisions on your behalf if you can't make them for yourself?
4. If you are facing a life-threatening illness, do you know what medical treatments you want to receive? (CPR, ventilator) Are there treatments you don't want to receive?
5. If you are facing a life-threatening illness, will you consider palliative care? Will you consider hospice?
6. How can the person identified to make decisions on your behalf be a good advocate for you in a medical crisis?

Planificación de cuidados avanzados. Hoja de trabajo

La planificación es importante y puede ayudar a su ser querido a expresar sus deseos. Utilice las siguientes preguntas como guía para una conversación sobre la planificación de los cuidados avanzados.

1. "Al pensar en los momentos decisivos en tu vida, ¿qué valores personales son importantes para ti (la religión, la familia, ser capaz de tomar tus propias decisiones, saber que alguien te está apoyando)?"
2. "Si tuvieras que hacer frente a una crisis médica, ¿qué quieres que tus seres queridos sepan?". *Si su ser querido está pasando por un momento difícil, comparte con él lo que a usted le gustaría que él sepa. Por ejemplo, para usted es importante que su ser querido entienda lo que usted desea a fin de evitar confusiones o desacuerdos.*
3. "¿Has pensado en alguien que pueda tomar decisiones en tu nombre, si tú no puedes tomarlas?"
4. "Si tienes que hacer frente a una enfermedad grave, ¿sabes qué tratamientos médicos quieres recibir (reanimación cardiopulmonar o CPR, ventilador)? ¿Hay algún tratamiento que no quieras recibir?"
5. "Si tuvieras una enfermedad grave, ¿considerarías recibir cuidados paliativos?, ¿considerarías ingresar a un centro para pacientes terminales?"
6. "¿Cómo podría la persona designada para tomar decisiones en tu nombre defender bien tus intereses en una crisis médica?"